

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANTIA 10327 01 OF 02 291937Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /063 W
-----033625 291947Z /43
O P 291858Z DEC 77 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7629
INFO USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 10327

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, CI
SUBJECT: GENERAL LEIGH'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT PINOCHET

REF: (A) SANTIAGO 10314; (B) SANTIAGO 10278

1. SUMMARY. GENERAL LEIGH HAS SENT A LETTER TO PINOCHET OPPOSING THE JAN 4 PLEBISCITE ON GROUNDS THAT IT UNDERMINES THE HONOR AND PRESTIGE OF THE ARMED FORCES, THAT IT IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE ROLE ASSUMED BY THE ARMED FORCES IN 1973, THAT IT IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE INSTITUTIONAL NORMS ESTABLISHED BY THE JUNTA AND THAT IT IS CONTRARY TO A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC LAWS. THE LETTER IS ALSO HIGHLY CRITICAL OF PINOCHET. IT HAS RECEIVED WIDE CIRCULATION IN SANTIAGO AND PINOCHET HAS PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT. THE LETTER IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FACTORS THAT MAY BE FORCING PINOCHET AND HIS IMMEDIATE ADVISORS TO RECONSIDER THEIR PLEBISCITE PLANS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE LETTER FROM AIR FORCE GENERAL AND JUNTA MEMBER GUSTAVO LEIGH TO PINOCHET IS DATED DECEMBER 23. WE KNOW FOR A FACT THAT LEIGH HAS AN AIR FORCE OFFICER PERSONALLY DELIVER A COPY OF THE LETTER TO PDC LEADERS AND WE UNDERSTAND COPIES WERE ALSO SENT TO ALL NEWSPAPERS AND THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SANTIA 10327 01 OF 02 291937Z

PRINCIPAL NEWS MAGAZINES. REPORTEDLY SUPREME COURT PRESIDENT EYZAGUIRRE ALSO RECEIVED A COPY. THERE MAY HAVE BEEN OTHER DISTRIBUTION. WHILE NO LOCAL NEWSPAPERS OR MAGAZINE HAS DARED TO PRINT THE LETTER (IT IS CLASSIFIED SECRET), ITS EXISTENCE AND GENERAL CONTENTS ARE NOW WIDELY KNOWN. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AP AND UPI HAVE FILED THE TEXT.

3. ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE PLEBISCITE. LEIGHT MAKES THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

-- IN THE FIRST PLACE, THAT THE PRESTIGE AND HONOR OF THE ARMED FORCES ARE ENDANGERED BY HOLDING A PLEBISCITE, THE RESULTS OF WHICH ARE CERTAIN TO RAISE DOUBTS AND SUSPICIONS AND FOR WHICH THE ARMED FORCES WILL BE THE ONLY GUARANTOR.

-- THE PRESENT MILITARY REGIME HAS AN OVERRIDING PURPOSE THAT SHOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO TRANSITORY POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES. UNTIL THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IS FULFILLED IT CANNOT BE COMPROMISED BY A POLITICAL PROCESS SUCH AS THE PLEBISCITE.

-- THE PRESENT REGIME IS BASED ON INSTITUTIONS, NOT INDIVIDUALS. A MEASURE AS FAR REACHING AS THE PLEBISCITE CAN ONLY BE CARRIED OUT WITH THE FULL AGREEMENT OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA. FAILURE TO OBTAIN SUCH AGREEMENT GOES AGAINST THE INSTITUTIONAL NORMS OF THE PRESENT REGIME.

-- FINALLY, THE PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL CONSULTATION IS CONTRARY TO VARIOUS SPECIFIC DECREES THAT NOW GOVERN CHILE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SANTIA 10327 01 OF 02 291937Z

4. CRITICISMS OF PINOCHET. THE ENTIRE LETTER CONSTITUTES A DENUNCIATION OF PINOCHET'S EFFORTS TO RUN CHILE WITH MINIMAL REGARD TO THE VIEWS OF THE OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS AND THEIR INSTITUTIONAL BASES. THERE ARE SOME PARTICULARLY POINTED PASSAGES:

-- "WE (THE AIR FORCE) REJECT RATIFYING PLEBISCITES THAT ARE APPROPRIATE TO GOVERNMENTS IN WHICH PERSONAL POWER IS EXERCISED, WHICH INDEED NEED SUCH RATIFICATION, BUT THAT ARE NOT APPROPRIATE OR DIGNIFIED FOR AN INSTITUTIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT SUCH AS OURS"

-- "UNFORTUNATELY IN THIS CASE, AS IN OTHERS PREVIOUSLY, THE MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA HAVE BEEN CONFRONTED WITH ACTIONS ALREADY TAKEN WITHOUT HAVING HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR GESTATION"

-- "WE ARE GREATLY CONCERNED BY SOME OF THE VIEWS WE HAVE HEARD OF MEMBERS OF YOUR ADVISORY GROUP RELATING TO WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THE PLEBISCITE, AND THE PLANS AND MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN DRAWN UP TO BE CARRIED OUT

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANTIA 10327 02 OF 02 291941Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /063 W
-----033688 291946Z /43

O P 291858Z DEC 77 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7630
INFO USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 10327

ONCE THE RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ARE KNOWN"

-- "YOUR EXCELLENCY HAS VIOLATED THE NORMS OF THE
JUNTA ... AND FOR THIS REASON THE CONSEQUENCES WILL BE
EXCLUSIVELY YOUR RESPONSIBILITY."

5. AT A MEETING OF THE JUNTA DECEMBER 28 PINOCHET HELD A
BRIEF PRESS CONFERENCE AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HD RE-
CEIVED THE LEIGH LETTER. HE ADMITTED DIFFERENCES OF
OPINION WITHIN THE JUNTA BUT DID HIS BEST TO PLAY THEM
DOWN: "WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS AND CAN DISAGREE IN OUR VIEWS.
BUT THE GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONS CONTINUE AS BEFORE."
LEIGH REFUSED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE. ADMIRAL MERINO
MADE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL
OPINIONS. HIS PERSONAL VIEW, HE SAID, IS THAT THE GOVERN-
MENT NEEDS TO KNOW THE STRENGTH OF SUPPORT THAT IT HAS
IN THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO CONTINUE GOVERNING.

6. COMMENT. GENERAL LEIGH, AND THE AIR FORCE AND THE
NAVY AS INSTITUTIONS, FEAR THAT PINOCHET WILL USE THE
RESULTS OF THE JAN 4 PLEBISCITE, IF IT IS HELD, TO
FURTHER STRENGTHEN HIS OWN POWER AT THE EXPENSE OF THE
JUNTA. THUS LEIGH PROBABLY CONCLUDED HE HAD VERY LITTLE
TO LOSE BY GOING QUASI-PUBLIC WITH THE LETTER. HE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SANTIA 10327 02 OF 02 291941Z

HOPES THAT THE THREAT TO MILITARY UNITY CONTAINED IN THE LETTER WILL FORCE PINOCHET TO BACK OFF THE PLEBISCITE PROPOSAL. THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REJECTION YESTERDAY OF THE SUPREME DECREE AUTHORIZING THE JANUARY 4 "NATIONAL CONSULTATION" (REFTEL A) STRENGTHENS LEIGH'S POSITION AND GIVES PINOCHET A FACE-SAVING OUT IF HE CHOOSES TO TAKE IT. BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE THREAT TO THE POSITIONS OF THE OTHER SERVICES WITHIN THE REGIME, AIR FORCE AND NAVY OFFICERS, AND WE BELIEVE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF ARMY OFFICERS, ARE CONCERNED THAT THE PLEBISCITE WILL WEAKEN, RATHER THAN STRENGTHEN, THE LEGITIMACY OF THE PRESENT REGIME AND MAKE MORE PROBLEMATIC THE NATIONAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING IN WHICH MANY STILL BELIEVE.
LANDAU

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SANTIA10327
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780002-0020
Format: TEL
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977127/aaaaafrd.tel
Line Count: 185
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 50dec206-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 SANTIAGO 10314, 78 SANTIAGO 10278
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 284532
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GENERAL LEIGH'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT PINOCHET
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, CI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/50dec206-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009